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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building

Statement submitted by Legião da Boa Vontade (Legion of Good Will), a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.6/2004/1.

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Regarding the 48th Session of Status of Women thematic unity on conflict prevention the Legion of Good Will, a Brazilian NGO in general Consultative Status with the Economical and Social Council (ECOSOC), in its 54 years of existence defends the theme starting from the principle that in order to guarantee "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building", it must be primarily destructed the spirit of gender inequities because the so expected PEACE amongst people begin first inside of their homes. In order to live a life far from conflicts, the Legion of Good Will's Leader José de Paiva Netto does his recommendation about the attainment of PEACE when he warns in his book *Reflexões da Alma* (Reflections of the Soul) : "(...) There are those who praise blood battlefields, creators of ruins, widows and orphans. While we, the Human Beings, do not discover another itinerary to our evolution as members of society, closer we will be to the so-called irrationals. I don't fool myself. It's evident to say that this situation will not be changed right a way, but it is urgent to be on the side of those who do not want to witness the dryness of our Planet as a spoiled fruit, or to blow up the planet as a monumental cosmic bomb. Is it a crime to think in that way?"

Since the beginning of life in society, women were considered to be inferior than man. In the last century, around the 1930's, women had no right to vote, very seldom they could drive a car. The Legion of Good Will defends a just, political, cultural, scientific, philosophical gender equality issues. As it is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his/her country. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life." (Excerpt extracted from Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action – Women in Power and Decision-making).

As much as women in our days can lead big corporations, pilot international aircrafts, convey operations in the hospital's surgery centers, take over the labor market, conclude college, approach to the same rights as men, there still is a long task to be accomplished. It's unacceptable to admit that in the 21st century , women have still suffered with the results of a millennial culture. The Legion of Good Will brings to the 48th Commission on Status of Women its cooperation for the absolute fulfillment of Beijing Platform of Action, working to facilitate partnership between men and women in all sections, wherever it is politically, culturally, scientifically, educationally and so on. As the President of the Legion of Good Will, journalist and writer Paiva Netto addresses gender issues, it is frequently noted his vision about the topic saying "To value the Woman means to dignify the Man". Following his dialect, the Organization reinforces the important role of women in the social arena. The Organization performs its work on the motto "women has the right to become President of a country, a religious leader, a CEO, a captain of aircraft and transatlantic ships; she has the right to become a doctor, an engineer, a teacher...thus she can actively act in all ranks of society. At work, there is a fair concept of value among men and women: that of competence". (Paiva Netto, extracted from the book Reflections and Thoughts, published in 1987).

As a result of innumerous financial and psychological problems lived by women to their fully completion of a healthy pregnancy, to decently raise their children the LGW created several programs to minimize this emergent situation in its Community and Educational Centers, amongst them the program "SER Mulher e Cidadão-Bebê" (Woman BEING and Baby-Citizen). This program develops a variety of integrated actions to all family members, independent of their ages. The main objective of the Program is to rescue human and professional self-esteem, intellectually and emotionally. A team of professional volunteers brings forth activities to improve the quality of life of those people as a whole, putting together ethics and spirituality to the material values, aiming at the true exercise of citizenship.

One of the LGW's activities in partnership with private section, governmental department, volunteer support to effectively generate results, is to enrich the quality of life of the most under-privileged women in society through educational conferences, beauty classes, workshops, occupational courses to improve family financial resources, orientation in the area of health to facilitate information on outpatient hospital admittance procedure, juridical and psychological help. Emphasis is given to the project Baby-Citizen to strengthen the relationship between mother — child, to encourage the full prenatal, to rescue the meaning of pregnancy and combat child and mother malnutrition.

The woman starts attending the program's practices since her third month of pregnancy. During all the pregnancy stages she is helped to prepare the unborn trousseau, she performs all clinical exams, she receives food items complement, as well as speech therapy, nursing, music-therapy assistance to her and her family. Women attend workshops about unborn caring, alternate food, breast- feeding, family-planning, sexually transmitted disease, breast and cervical cancer, etc. The same importance is given to the motivation of praying together in family.

The practices continue until the baby turns one year of age. During this year, mothers come in groups to the workshops. They are oriented about infant malnutrition, nutrition, day care center, sanitation and baby oral health. Another activity to guarantee women's rights is the Jesus Day Care Center, part of the educational complex – "Instituto de Educação da LBV" (LGW's Educational Institute), that prepares the student to achieve his/her greatest potential. Every year more than 1.000 students are taken from the social risk situation and are prepared for the labor market competition. The educational complex is composed by modern research centers, physics, chemistry, biology and computer laboratories, three gymnasiums and a big recreation area.

In this context, the Jesus Day Care Center has a preponderant role because children since their first years of age, being in the nursery or pre-k, are involved by the Legion in the learning process with solid basis. These children will turn out to be an adult prepared for life, a complete Human Being, with brain and heart connected. The differential of this educational complex is the process of the Ecumenical Citizen Pedagogy, introducing values of Spirituality, an accurate taste for Solidarity practices in students' character. It enables individuals to contribute to the non-stopping improvement of social environment.

From the 1990 decade, the Legion made available hundreds of schools, Educational and Community Centers throughout Brazil and abroad. In those centers the LGW offers free-of-charge early education, elementary, junior high school education, occupational courses to thousands of children and youth. As an example, we have the "LGW Educational, Cultural and Community Center" in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the "José de Paiva Netto Institute" in São Paulo, "Alziro Zarur Home and Park" in Glorinha, Rio Grande do Sul, and many other modern occupational school centers in Brazil. The Ecumenical Citizen Pedagogy is applied to LGW's educational centers to develop Brain and Heart together. It conciliates intellect and feeling under the light of spirituality. It contributes for the solution of the greatest human conflicts and guarantee women's equal participation on gender equality issues.

In order to prevent conflict and empower women on conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace building the Legion of Good Will suggests that the 48th Session of Status of Women, Governmental and Civil Society maximize strategies to rescue the quality of public and familiar education, all based upon the adoption of spiritual values.